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Wm. C. Hayburn
5/12/51

MEMORIALS OF COLUMBUS,

READ TO THE

Maryland Historical Society,

BY

ROBERT DODGE,

3 April, 1851.



BALTIMORE:
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY.
MDCCCLI.

No 14

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ENTERED, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1851, by the
MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States.

JOHN D. TOY, PRINTER.

COLUMBUS.

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AUTOGRAPH LETTERS AT GENOA.

AT the meeting of the NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, held at its rooms, on the evening of the fifteenth day of January, 1850, I had the honor of presenting to the Society a copy of one of the very few remaining autograph letters of Christopher Columbus, in the original and beautiful Italian.

Upon the nineteenth day of January, 1848, during my stay at Genoa, I had the opportunity of examining that city's proudest treasury,—its Custodia of the Memorials of Columbus, which with Parmegiano's Portrait in the Royal Gallery at Naples, compose some valuable relics of him, the results of whose sublime achievement may well fill coming centuries for their development.

During the brief space that the Custodien allowed me to hold the letter in my hand, I succeeded in making a correct copy of the original, which, as one of but three landmarks of his history supplied by himself, and left for us, is justly regarded by his countrymen with no ordinary veneration. Perhaps their famous Emerald Vase or the ashes of St. John, do not meet with equal regard.

I presented the copy that I thus had myself made, to the Society, without any accompanying data, which might be useful to demonstrate the originality and authenticity of the donation, as well as its historical importance.

Favorable opportunity has since, through the courtesy of Mr. Brantz Mayer, of Baltimore, and from other sources, placed in my hands some evidence thereof, which I now ask permission succinctly to detail.

It may perhaps, be as well here to premise a short history of the collection and preservation of the few autograph Memorials of the Great Discoverer of the New World.

Of the Autograph Letters of Christopher Columbus, there are but *three* as yet known to the world; the residue, though long desired, have never yet been brought to light.

The priceless value of an autograph letter from the accomplished mind of Him, who was confessedly at the head of physical science, at that period of the awakening of the human intellect; which speaks to us, at the vast distance of near three centuries and a half, of his daily griefs, hopes, and plans of beneficence; in that most mellifluous of human tongues, the daily speech of his cotemporaries, Michael Angelo, Titian, Corregio and Raphael, and whose harmonies were even as Columbus wrote, flowing in immortal grace from the pens of Ariosto and Machiavelli, must be manifest to all, and more especially in this land—the scene of his glory, now so rapidly hasting forward in that grand career, predicted in the sublime visions of his own prophecies.

We are told by the Decurions of Genoa, that the library of the Count Michael Angelo Cambiasi, a former Senator of that city, was, after his death, in July, 1816, advertised for sale. Its catalogue contained as one of its Nos. the “Codice dei Privilegii del Colombo.” The Decurions of Genoa, anxious to procure this treasure, had the public sale adjourned until the King’s answer had been received to their memorial on the subject. The King of Sardinia, Victor Emanuel, earnestly seconded their wishes, ordering the originals to be deposited in the archives of the Court at Turin; where an accurate copy having been taken, at the solicitations of the Decurions of Genoa, the originals were given up to them and the copy left at Turin. The originals were received by Genoa, on the 29th day of January, 1821, and shortly after a beautiful monument or

*custodia*, being a marble pillar surmounted by a bust of Columbus, was erected as their honored depository, and placed in an apartment in the beautiful marble palace of the Doges of Genoa.

A small door of gilded bronze in the centre, opens to still another door of similar material, behind which, in their golden receptacle are preserved these sacred relics. The closet is secured by two keys, which are kept respectively as appurtenances of office, by the Senator and by the Cardinal Legate of Genoa, during their terms of office. To see the relics, both keys must be obtained on written application to these dignitaries.

The reflecting stranger who has the happiness of visiting "Genova la Superba," as she is so well designated, and looks with admiration on that beautiful palace, the seat of the pomps of its long line of illustrious Doges, still so fresh and well preserved, despite French Vandalism; may now, as he walks through its classic corridors, colonnades and porticos, well hesitate to attribute the inspiration of the scene, to the thronging memories of the great Doria, the deliverer of his country, the Crusades, the capture of Constantinople, the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre, or to these memorials of Genoa's greater Son, who made her the mother of a New World.

The documents contained in this monument to Columbus, consist of forty-four separate charters, warrants, orders and grants of privileges, beautifully engrossed on vellum, by the art of the copyist and illuminator of that age, and also the autograph letters of Columbus, of which we purpose to speak.

These documents are enclosed in a bag of richly gilt and embossed scarlet Spanish leather, with a silver lock; being the "book of copies of his letters and of his privileges" which in 1502, when he set off upon his fourth and last voyage, he entrusted to the care and guardianship of Signor Francesco di Rivarolo, to forward to his intimate friend at Genoa, "the most learned doctor," as he styles him, and "the ambassador" Signor Nicolo Odérigo, for his safe keeping and preservation.

In the two autograph letters, which are *all* that were published accompanying the copy of these documents of Columbus,

printed by order of the Decurions of Genoa, in 1823; (entitled "Codice Diplomatico Colombo-Americano,") Columbus addresses both letters to Signor Nicolo Odérigo, the *first* dated March 21st, 1502, just before he sailed upon his fourth and last voyage of discovery; and the *second*, dated the 27th of December, 1504, two months after his return; as will appear by the copies of these letters annexed.

In the *first* of these letters, bearing date Seville, March 21, 1502, he says: "I gave the book of my Privileges to Signor Francesco di Rivarolo, in order that he might forward it to you, along with a copy of the missive letters. I beg of you as a particular favor to write to Don Diego, to acknowledge their receipt and to mention where they are deposited."

In the *second* of these letters, bearing date Seville, December 27, 1504, he says: "At that time, when I set off upon the voyage from which I have just returned, I gave to Francesco di Rivarolo, a book of copies of my Letters, and another of my Privileges, in a bag of colored Spanish leather, with a silver lock; and *two letters for the Bank of St. George*, to which I assigned the tenth of my revenues, in diminution of the duties upon corn and other provisions: no acknowledgment of all this has reached me. Signor Francesco tells me, that all arrived there in safety. If so, it was uncourteous in these gentlemen of St. George not to have favored me with an answer, nor have they thereby improved their affairs, which gives me cause to say, that whoever serves the public, serves nobody."

The magistrate of St. George, at Genoa, on the 8th day of December, 1502, writes him at great length, acknowledging the receipt of a letter from him, in which he gives orders to his son, Don Diego, that the tenth part of his annual revenues should be paid to the city of Genoa, in diminution of the duties on corn, wine and other provisions, for which they render suitable acknowledgments to the Admiral, replying in detail to his said letter.

This letter of the magistrate of St. George, of Genoa, of which we append a translation, therefore could not have been received by the Admiral.

*These* three letters form all the letters that are printed by the Decurions of Genoa, in their publication of 1823, of autographs *by*, or addressed *to* the Admiral.

The manifest hiatus of meaning in this correspondence, can only be explained by the production of that letter *from Columbus* to the magistrates or *Bank of St. George*, mentioned by himself in the second letter, and acknowledged on receipt, and answered at length by the letter of the magistrate of St. George.

It may be as well here to observe, that on examination of the printed volume of the Decurions of Genoa, it appears from the detailed history of the documents furnished on page 138, et seq. that they print *only* the contents of the book of Privileges, and book of copies of Letters, and such autograph letters as are found therein, and attached to the leather case of the book, and no others.

The letter of Columbus, of which I had the honor of presenting a copy to the New York Historical Society, in Italian, copied from the autograph, was by the Custodien, taken out of the same depository, but was not attached to the book of Privileges.

This letter bears date the 2d day of April, 1502, at Seville; addressed to the Governors of the Bank of St. George, at Genoa; gives directions to Don Diego to pay the one tithe of his revenue to the Bank, in diminution of the taxes; informs them of his having sent to Signor Nicolo Odérigo a copy of his Privileges and Charters; and is thus, as will be seen by the copy appended, *the missing letter*, referred to by Columbus himself in his second letter, and fully acknowledged and answered in detail by the magistrate of St. George, on the 8th day of December following.

Condensing a few leading events of the life of the great navigator, may throw more light upon this intrinsically interesting letter.

Biographers have not as yet determined whether it was in 1446 or 1447, or earlier, that Columbus was born. Their theories are indeed numerous. Dr. Robertson, in note 11 to

page 62 of Vol. I. of his History of America, says: "The time of Columbus' birth may be nearly ascertained by the following circumstances. It appears from the fragment of a letter addressed by him to Ferdinand and Isabella, A. D. 1501, that he had at that time been engaged forty years in a seafaring life. In another letter he informs them that he went to sea at the age of fourteen: whence it follows that he was born April, A. D. 1447,"—and cites Ferdinand's Life C. Col. Mr. Prescott, although not venturing in his text positively to state it, in his History of Ferdinand and Isabella, Vol. II. page 115, note 6, and Vol. III. page 242, note 16, sums up all the authorities, and comes to the same result. It seems that Mr. Irving's date of 1435, based on the hypotheses of Navarrete and Bernaldez is conjectural, and opposed to the great weight of authorities. The last writer appears unwilling to allow that the infirmities of the declining years of the Admiral were not the natural result of his numerous mental and bodily hardships, and therefore adds ten years to his life. Spotorno and others say 1446: the rest 1447. However, after much controversy, it seems agreed that he was the son of the wool-carder, Domenico Colombo, and his wife, Susanna, and that the place of his nativity was in the present street of St. Andrew's Gate, or Lane of Mulcento, in the Parish of St. Stephen, being the suburbs of Genoa.

From the age of fourteen until the age of sixty, or 1506, when he died at Valladolid, his habitual pursuit was navigation. The facts and speculations of all the existing science of the age were applied by him, in the study and practice of his favorite occupation.

These memorials of him, and the still lingering historic reminiscence of his age, establish his character, to have been immeasurably superior to his fellow men: that his mind, enriched by a long experience in navigating the seas of Europe, and by the contemplation of the phenomena of nature, and the laws of the physical world, had risen to an unalterable conviction of the truth of that ever memorable and grand conclusion, from those

laws and phenomena, which shone upon his own mind with the clearness and directness of a sunbeam.

How he, of whom his own age was not worthy, toiled and wandered: how much privation and suffering, how many griefs and sorrows he endured; how many long years he begged his way from door to door, and from court to court; how his clear reasoning was derided; and how often baffled in the effort to gain a hearing among the ignorant and selfish sovereigns of Europe; how his great heart and hope outlived this all; and how at last, the gracious queen of Castile, lifted him up from the dust of his abasement, and staking the jewels of her crown, set him forth upon that voyage, which at once opened the area of a world, and covered him and her with a more resplendent glory than all human diadems;—is familiar to us all.

The great navigator, made in all, four voyages to this Continent, or, as it was then called, the Indies.

His *first* voyage began on the 3d\* day of August, 1492, from Palos; and he returned to Lisbon, on the 4th day of March, 1493.

His *second* voyage started from Cadiz, the 25th day of September, 1493; and he returned to Burgos, in Spain, on the 14th of June, 1497.

On his *third* voyage, he sailed from San Lucar, on the 30th day of May, 1498; the reins of power in Hispaniola, were then in the hands of his vindictive enemies; and the student of the life of this really sublime hero and prophet of his age, reads with weeping heart, how he was reviled, persecuted, disgraced, and sent home a prisoner to Cadiz, in Spain, where he arrived a captive in chains, on the 20th day of November, 1500.

Two long and weary years, were then spent by him in repelling the malicious falsehoods of his jealous foes, before the tribunals and court of Spain, which had but two years before showered upon the discoverer dominion and honors equal to royalty. The truth, finally, as ever, when facing falsehood, triumphed. The royal favor was restored, and on the 9th day of May, 1502,

\* All these dates being prior to A. D. 1582, the epoch of the Gregorian Calendar, or change to the New Style, eleven days are therefore to be added to bring them to the modern reckoning, the present or New Style.

with a still greater equipment, and still greater glory, though his conscious satisfaction of victory over his enemies was saddened by his experience of their malice, he set forth on his *fourth voyage* to the Indies from the same port of Cadiz.

He returned home to San Lucar, in the month of September, 1504; the precise day of his arrival is not ascertained.

This fourth voyage was an addition to his glory; as he therein first saw the main land of this Continent in voyaging along the South American coasts. This was his last voyage. The great Mariner returned no more. In less than two years afterwards, and on the 20th day of May, 1506, at Valladolid, his mighty heart surrendered to "the last enemy, which is death."

In a codicil to his will, which codicil was written by the testator himself at Segovia, August 15, 1505, and executed at Valladolid, the 19th day of May, 1506, (the day before his death,) Columbus declares that his will had been made and executed on the 1st day of April, 1502, and deposited in the keeping of father Gaspar Certosa, at Seville. Another codicil, called the military codicil, written on the blank leaf of the Breviary, presented to him by Pope Alexander VI., dated at Valladolid, the 14th day of May, 1506, has also been published. This will itself has never yet seen the light; but a previous will, dated in 1498, has been, of late years, discovered and published.

Perhaps this may be charged to the wilfulness of that crowd of selfish claimants, who started so many wild and dubious stories, and unfounded litigations for the succession to his wealth and honors, and prosecuted their finally unsuccessful suits for generations after his decease. In this will, he declares Genoa to be his birth-place, and directs his son Don Diego, therefore to honor and be serviceable to that city. The controversy was created by a race of claimants from Cuccharo or Cogoletto, who attempted to deprive Genoa of the honor of his birth-place, to fix it at Cuccharo, and thereby to make out their own lineal descent and title to the succession, to the honor and wealth of the great Admiral of Genoa. The explicit declarations of his will, that he was a native of Genoa, stood in their way; and it is easy to believe that to protract their pertinacious litigation, they found it convenient to suppress the will.

This epitome of the leading events of his life points clearly to the character of this letter of the 2d day of April, 1502. It appears that the month of April, 1502, was selected by the Admiral for making the final disposition of his earthly affairs. On the 1st day of the month, at Seville, in Spain, where he was occupied in the business of his last expedition, he executes his will, the most solemn record of humanity, and therein speaks with affection of his own distant and native Genoa. During the month of March, he had given diligence to have all the charters, warrants and grants, from the crown and others to him, accurately copied, authenticated by a public notary, and sent by the trusty hand of intimate friendship, to his son, Don Diego, at Genoa, there to be carefully deposited and preserved. After thus honoring his native city, by its selection as the depository of his most valuable muniments of title, he seeks to confer a more substantial favor upon his fellow-citizens. To diminish the burthen of the taxes upon food, which bore heavily on the poor, he, by this letter, voluntarily yields up to the city one *tenth* of all the revenues he derived from this source; and entrusts his son, Don Diego, with the honorable office of executing his plan of beneficence. The letter is therefore *testamentary* in its character; and was more efficient than if he had included it in his will, which became the prey of the avarice of litigants.

It is addressed, like the others, to Signor Nicolo Odérigo, his intimate friend; an accomplished fellow-citizen of Genoa, who was one of its Senators, and had been honored by its embassy to the Court of Spain, then the first power of the world.

Mr. Irving, in the second volume of his History of Columbus, alludes generally to this subject; states the fact that Columbus sent two letters to the Bank of St. George, assigning to it the one-tenth of his revenues, to be employed in diminishing the duties on corn and other provisions, but does not furnish any copies of the autograph letters of the Admiral or the Bank, nor any additional information.\* A very material confirmation has however, been furnished me.

\*I am informed by Mr. Irving, that he has not visited Genoa, since the discovery of these relics of Columbus, and therefore has had no opportunity of personal inspection.

In Niles's National Register for June 15th, 1839, it is stated, on the authority of the New York Gazette, that Captain Baker, of the Baltimore Brig Helen McLeod, recently arrived from Genoa, had furnished to the Editor of the Gazette a translation of an autograph letter from the great discoverer of our Continent, which translation had been given to Captain Baker by Mr. Robert Campbell, who at that period was United States Consul at Genoa. This letter is dated 2d April, 1502, addressed to the Bank of St. George, at Genoa. The Editor remarks that it will be perused with interest as an original from Christopher Columbus, *never before published*, and appends (without, however, giving the Italian) a very fair rendering into English of the identical letter, which I have translated and inserted as No. 4 in the Appendix to this paper. As evidence from an independent source and high character, this additional testimony of the authenticity of the autograph is entitled to great weight and respect.\*

The letters speak for themselves, their contents require no commentary; and least of all, can the gap of meaning between the letters printed by the Decurions of Genoa, be supplied by the cool assertion of D. Giovanni Batista Spotorno, in his Memoir of Columbus, that the letter of the magistrate of St. George refers, and is an answer to the first letter of Columbus, bearing date at Seville, March 21st, 1502, which is addressed to Nicolo Odérigo, upon a subject entirely distinct.

It may be pertinent to add that the Bank of St. George at Genoa, whose banking house, girt with the Pisan chains, the trophy of Genoa's ancient fame, is still a conspicuous monument at the side of the Porto franco, arose about A. D. 1400, as a means of providing the Republic with funds to repel the aggressions of the exiled nobles, who then in great force threatened its destruction.

The Republic pledged the whole revenues of the state, to a company of merchants, called the Compera or Banco di San

\* Mr. Robert Campbell was in office as United States Consul at Genoa, in September, 1839. See U. S. Official Register for 1839, p. 11.

Georgio, for the payment of the advances of money required by the exigencies of the State. The bank was for loans and deposits. Its transactions were on a grand scale; many of the European States, and Spain in particular, were its debtors, and its income exceeded ten millions of French livres. The administration of its concerns was committed to eight directors, and it had jurisdiction over its own officers. The product of the imposts, pledged by the State to the Bank, for the payment of its loan and interest, when inadequate, was constantly increased.

At the time of its failure, its rents amounting to 3,400,000 Genoese Lire, or about seven hundred thousand dollars, the property of its creditors was transferred to the account books of France.

The Bank had all the nature and powers of the English East India Company, being both a financial and trading corporation. Its colonial administration and power extended to the Crimea, Asia Minor, and over the Island of Corsica.

This great engine of the State, was managed with power and integrity; its bills continued current throughout Europe, until French Vandalism overran the territory of the Republic and seized on Corsica; until the year 1750, when the Bank failed; the artery of life to Genoa ceased to furnish aliment when the other powers of the venerable Republic were destroyed.

The interest of the subject is my excuse for the length of this paper, whose conclusion I now form by copies of the three letters of Columbus, and of the letter of the Magistrate of St. George to the Admiral.

## APPENDIX.

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### No. 1

“TO THE AMBASSADOR SIGNOR NICOLO ODERIGO.”

“*Sir :*

“It is impossible to describe the solicitude which your departure has caused among us. I gave the book of my Privileges to Signor Frco. di Rivarolo, in order that he might forward it to you, along with a copy of the missive letters. I beg of you as a particular favor, to write to Don Diego, to acknowledge their receipt, and to mention where they are deposited. Another copy shall be furnished and sent to you, in the same manner, and by the said Sig. Franco. You will find another letter in it, in which their highnesses have promised to give me all that belongs to me, and to put Don Diego in possession of it, as you will see. I am writing to Signor Gian Luigi, and to the Signora Caterina, and the letter will accompany this. I shall depart, in the name of the Holy Trinity, with the first favorable weather, with a considerable equipment. If Girolamo di Santo Stephano comes, he must wait for me, and not entangle himself with any one, for they will get from him whatever they can, and then leave him in the lurch. Let him come here, and he will be received by the king and queen until I arrive.

“May our Lord have you in his holy keeping.

“March 21, 1502, in Seville.

“At your commands,

S.

S. A. S

X. M. Y.

X<sub>po</sub> FERENS.”\*

\* It may explain this peculiar signature, which is so indicative of the fashion of his age, to add, what I believe comes originally from his son Ferdinand's Life of the Admiral; that Columbus, always, when trying his pen, before writing, wrote these words :

“Jesu cum Mariâ,  
Sit nobis in viâ.”

## No. 2.

“TO THE MOST LEARNED DOCTOR NICOLO ODERIGO.

“*Learned Sir:*

“When I set off upon the voyage from which I have just returned, I spoke to you fully: I have no doubt you retained a complete recollection of every thing. I expected upon my arrival to have found here letters, and possibly a confidential person from you. At that time I likewise gave to Francesco di Rivarolo, a book of copies of my letters, and another of my Privileges, in a bag of colored Spanish leather, with a silver lock, *and two letters for the Bank of St. George, to which I assigned the tenth of my revenues, in diminution of the duties upon corn and other provisions.* No acknowledgment of all this has reached me. Sig. Francesco tells me that all arrived there in safety. If so, it was uncourteous in those gentlemen of St. George not to have favored me with an answer, nor have they thereby improved their affairs; which gives me cause to say, that whoever serves the public, serves nobody. I gave another book of my Privileges, like the above, in Cadiz, to Franco Cattaneo, the bearer of this, in order that he might likewise forward it to you; and that both of them might be placed in security wherever you thought proper. Just before my departure, I received a letter from the king and queen, my lords; a copy of which you will find there. You will see that it came very opportunely; nevertheless, Don Diego was not put in possession, as had been there promised.

“While I was in the Indies, I wrote to their highnesses an account of my voyage, by three or four opportunities; one of my letters having come back to my hands, I send it to you inclosed in this, with the supplement of my voyage in another letter, in order that you may give it to Signor Gian Luigi, with the other of advice; to whom I write that you will be the reader and interpreter of it. I would wish to have ostensible letters, speaking cautiously of the matter in which we are engaged. I arrived here very unwell, just before the queen, my mistress, died, (who is now with God,) without my seeing her. Till now

I cannot say how my affairs will finish. I believe her highness has provided well for them in her last will; and the king, my master, is very well disposed. Franco Cattaneo will explain the rest more minutely to you.

“May our Lord preserve you in his care.

Seville, 27th December, 1504.

S.

“The Admiral of the Ocean, Viceroy,  
and Governor General of the Indies, &c.”

S. A. S.

X. M. Y.

X<sup>po</sup> FERENS.

### No. 3.

*Copy of a Letter written by the magistrate of St. George's to Columbus.*

“Ill. Vir, et clarissime, amantissimeque

Concivis, et Domine memorandissime.

“The distinguished Juris Consult, Messer Nicolo di Odérigo, on his return from the embassy to which he was appointed from our illustrious Republic, to the most excellent and glorious monarch, (of Spain,) delivered me a letter from your Excellency, which gave me singular pleasure, from the affectionate regard, so conformable to your disposition, which your Excellency therein exhibited towards your native country, to which you have shown most singular love and charity, in wishing it to be partakers of the favors which it has pleased Divine Providence to bestow upon your Excellency. Your aforesaid country and people must feel what singular profit and advantages they will derive from the orders you have given to Don Diego, your son, that the tenth of your annual revenues should be paid to this city, in diminution of the duties on corn, wine and other provisions. Nothing could be more charitable, nor more memorable than this, or will tend more to the remembrance of your glory, which, in other respects, is as great and extraordinary, as according to history, any man in the world has ever acquired, having by your own perseverance, energy and prudence discovered so large a portion of this earth and globe of

the lower world, which for so many centuries past had remained unknown to the people of that which we inhabit. But this great exercise of your extraordinary glory, is in truth much more memorable and complete, as proceeding from the humanity and benignity which it proves you possess towards the country of your birth, on which account we praise, as it deserves, your disposition, and pray to God to preserve you many years. We shall always bear that affection towards your most illustrious son, Don Diego, which he is entitled to, as being your son, and from the splendor and glory of your actions of which this our common country is proud of having its part. To Don Diego we have expressed by letter, as we now do to your Excellency, our readiness to do everything in our power for the honor and advantage of your illustrious family. The above mentioned Messer Nicolo has related to us many things respecting your Favors and Privileges, of which he has brought copies here, with which we were much gratified, and return you everlasting thanks for those of which you had made us partakers.

“From Genoa, the 8th of December, MDII.”

Here ends the publication by the Decurions of Genoa, in 1823. The following is a copy of the letter in the original Italian, and translation obtained by myself from the same depository, in Genoa, January 19, 1848.

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No. 4.

ALLI MOLTO NOBILI SIGNORI  
DEL MOLTO MAGNIFICO UFFICIO  
DI S. GIORGIO  
A GENOVA.

*Al di dentro*

*Molto nobili Signori:*

Benche il corpo cammini qua, il cuore sta li da continuo. Nostro Signore mi 'ha fatto la maggior, che dòpo David abbia fatto a nessuno. Le cose della mia impresa, già risplendóno, e piu risplendérebbero, se la oscurità del Governo non le coprisse.

Io torno alle Indie, in nome della Santissima Trinità, per tornare subito ; e perché, Io son mortale, lascio, a D. Diego, mio figlio, che di tutta la rendita, vi corresponda corti, per il decimo del totale, di essa, ogni anno, per sempre, in sconto, del prodotto, del grano, e vino, edaltre vettovaglie commestibile. Se questo decimo sarà molto, ricevetelo, e se no, ricevete la volontà che io tengo. Vi prego, per grazia, che tengniàte riccomandato questo mio figlio. Messer Nicolo Odérigo sa dei fatti miei piu che io stesso, e lui ho mandato la copia dei miei privilegi, e carte ; perche li pongo in buona guardià, avrei piacere, che li vedreste.

Il Re e la Regina, miei Signori, mi vogliono onora più che mai. La San. Trin. guardi le vostre nobili persone, e accresca in molto magnifico uffizio.

Fatto in Seviglia le 2 di Aprile 1502.

L'Ammiraglio Maggure del Mare Oceano, e Vice Re, e Governatore Generale delle Isole, e della Terra Ferma, del Asia, e delle Indie, del Re, e della Regina, miei Signori, e suo Capitano Generale del Mare, e del suo Consiglio.

S.

S. A. S.

X. M. Y.

X<sup>po</sup> FERENS.

Supplex.

Servus. Altissimi Salvatoris.

Xristi. Mariæ. Josephi.

Christo Ferens.

#### TRANSLATION.

TO THE MOST NOBLE GENTLEMEN OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS BANK  
OF ST. GEORGE AT GENOA.

*To the within*

*Most noble Gentlemen :*

Although the body travels hither, the heart remains with you for ever. Our Lord hath shown me greater grace than after David hath he shown to any one. The affairs of my enterprise

are now resplendent, and will be more so, if the darkness of the government shall not overwhelm them.

I go again to the Indies, in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, to return speedily: and forasmuch as I am mortal, I leave in charge to Don Diego my son, that annually, for ever, he shall account to you for the one-tenth of all my Income, in order to reduce the taxes on corn, wine and other provisions. If this Tenth shall be considerable, accept it; and if not, accept the regard I entertain for you. I solicit your gracious consideration for my son. Signor Nicolo Odérigo, knowing of my affairs more than I do myself, I have sent him the copy of my Privileges and Charters; and as I thus place them in good guardianship, have the kindness to examine, when you see them.

The King and Queen, my Lords, treat me with more favor daily than ever. May the Most Holy Trinity safely keep your noble persons, and magnify you in your illustrious office.

Done at Seville, the 2d of April, 1502.

The High admiral of the Oceanic Sea, and Vice Roy and Governor General of the Islands, and of the Terra Ferma, of Asia, and of the Indies, of the King and Queen, my Lords, and their Captain General of the Sea, and of their Council.

S.

S. A. S.

X. M. Y.

X<sup>po</sup> FERENS.

#### EXPLANATION OF THIS SIGNATURE.

Supplex.

Servus. Altissimi Salvatoris.

Xristi. Mariæ. Josephi.

Christo Ferens.

The Suppliant

Servant of the Most High Saviour

Christ, of Mary, of Joseph

Christo Ferens or

Christopher.

## MARTIN BEHAIM AND HIS GLOBE,

### AT NUREMBERGH.

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I TRUST that I may be allowed in connection with the Memorials of Columbus, to add a brief detail and description of a memento of his age, at Nürembergh in Bavaria; which during my stay at that interesting city, by the courtesy of resident friends, on the thirteenth day of September, 1847, it was my good fortune to visit and inspect. I allude to the celebrated Terrestrial Globe there, made by Martin Behaim, a native of that ancient imperial city; a most eminent navigator and discoverer, constructed by him in August, 1492, and left with his family there, with whose descendants in their ancient mansion, it still remains.

Apart from its originality and antiquity, it has attained a greater interest; having through misrepresentation, been made the prominent material for controversial detraction of the fame of Columbus. In this brief and unassuming paper, I purpose succinctly to detail the information afforded by others, of the personal history of the maker of this globe, Martin Behaim; and a few extracts from the controversial authors, so far as may be useful, in showing the importance of concluding with a simple and truthful description of this globe by an eye witness.

This spirit of detraction survived in 1786, when in April, M. Otto, a French gentleman, then residing in the city of New York, addressed to Dr. Franklin his able and ingenious "Memoir on the Discovery of America," in which the claims of Behaim to priority of discovery are presented with as much force as they are susceptible of. In my extracts from the memoir, it will be perceived that the statements of M. Otto, in

his loose description of the globe, are contrary to the fact, and show that he, like other writers on this subject, has failed to examine the globe itself, although it is one of his chief arguments. But all mementos of a man of science and practical navigator, eminent for his own discoveries, and for the intimate friendship of Columbus, kindred in spirit and pursuit, cannot fail, however presented, to secure an abiding interest.

His name is variously given, Behain, Behem, Boehm, Behen and Behenira, but the name now of the family at Nürembergh is written "Behaim."

Martin Behaim was born at Nürembergh, in Bavaria, about A. D. 1430, and died at Lisbon, A. D. 1506, the same year as his great cotemporary Columbus. His ancestors were of an ancient and honorable family of Nürembergh. His genius and education were early inclined to diligent study of the master subject of that age, geography, which, after the Crusades, had opened the treasures of the east to the enterprise of awakening Europe, for which oriental commerce, his own native Nurembergh, was, until the passage of the Cape of Good Hope, in 1497, one of the chief marts, became a subject of increased attraction, by the marvellous histories of Marco Polo, Sir John Mandeville and other travellers of the preceding age. About the year 1481, he is supposed to have entered the service of King Alphonso V. of Portugal; no doubt attracted thither by the fame of the then late Prince Henry's munificent patronage, and the discoveries of the Portuguese, who had in 1471, crossed the Equator in their voyages of discovery on the Coast of Africa. Appointed by John II. the successor of Alphonso, to the Council or Department for the Improvement of the Art of Navigation, he is, by some authors, alleged then to have invented or at least to have introduced the Astrolabe, the forerunner of the Sextant, into nautical use. Without discussing his title to the discovery of the Island of Fayal in 1460, in the service of Isabella, Regent of Burgundy and Flanders, from whom he is said to have obtained a grant of the Island, a matter of some question; it is more material to state that as Cosmographer for the King, in 1484, he accompanied Diego Cano, on his voyage,

which discovered the Western Coast of Africa, as far as the Coast of Congo, and for his eminent service was, on his return in 1485, knighted by the King John II.; the ruling policy of whose reign was to extend the area of discovery, and by her newly acquired colonies, to elevate Portugal to a great commercial power, and fitting rival to Genoa and Venice. During this voyage, Behaim is alleged by several authorities to have extended his course to the great South Western Sea, discovered and followed the Coast of Brazil, Patagonia and the Straits through which Magellan, whose name it bears, in 1519, passed to the Pacific, in his memorable voyage, the first circumnavigation of the Globe.

As a curious subject, it may be worth while to state such evidence as is urged; prefacing that his own Globe is the best refutation of a claim, which reaches us mainly from German Authors, and was unheard of in Portugal, where Behaim long lived, and was so widely known and honored; and is therefore only capable of affording entertainment to the student of his age.

The chroniclers of Nürembergh, anxious to add new laurels to their already distinguished fellow burgher, speak from the archives of that ancient city, that "Martin Behem, traversing the Atlantic Ocean for several years, examined the American Islands, and discovered the Strait, which bears the name of Magellan, before either Christopher Columbus, or Magellan sailed those seas, and mathematically delineated on a geographical chart for the King of Lusitania, the situation of the Coast around every part of that famous and renowned Strait." Apparently this record must have been written after the year 1519; the epoch of Magellan's voyage. It is asserted, that the archives of Nürembergh contain letters from Behaim, dated in 1486, confirming this record; but it is at least singular that they have never yet seen the light. To show that this story loses nothing in its German progress but

"Vires acquirit eundo,"

allow me to add a few more of the alleged authorities. Hartman Schedel, a chronicler of Nürembergh, writing about the

time of Behaim, after describing the outfit of the celebrated expedition in 1484, by John II., under Behaim and Diego Cano, for discovery on the West Coast of Africa, already mentioned, says of Behaim, that he "was a man very well acquainted with the situation of the globe; blessed with a constitution able to bear the fatigues of the sea, and who by actual experiments and long sailing, had made himself perfect master of the longitudes and latitudes of Ptolemy in the West. These two," (Behaim and Cano,) "by the bounty of heaven, coasting along the Southern Ocean, and having crossed the Equator, got into the other hemisphere; where, facing to the Eastward, their shadows projected towards the South, and right hand. Thus by their industry, they may be said to have opened to us another world, hitherto unknown, and for many years attempted by none but the Genoese, and by them in vain."

This assertion of the chronicler, who might with his learned tomes well sleep in his native dust; has, we are told, been quoted and enlarged beyond his limits, which must be confessed are somewhat vague, by two famous men of their time: Eneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius II., and Cellarius, but neither show any wish to verify their oracles. With them, the case on *authorities*, set up to maintain Behaim's priority of discovery of America, closes. Is it not a little singular, that such a claim should have survived till the close of the last century?

Another theory, the natural sequent of the former, and gathered about the memory of Behaim, cobweb-like, will, by your permission, detain us a moment, before passing to the conclusion of the whole matter,—the description of Behaim's Terrestrial Globe in Nürembergh. A once celebrated astronomer, Riccioli, an Italian, who surely might be presumed to have possessed better means of knowledge, is brought into the field to say that "Christopher Columbus never thought of an expedition to the West Indies until some time before, while in the Island of Madeira, where amusing himself in forming and delineating geographical charts, he obtained information from Martin Boehm, or as the Spaniards say, from Alphonsus Sanchez de Huelva," (the father-in-law of Behaim,) "a pilot, who by mere chance

had fallen in with the island afterward called Dominica," and "let Boehm and Columbus have each their praise, they were both excellent navigators; but Columbus would never have thought of his expedition to America had not Boehm gone there before him. His name is not so much celebrated as that of Columbus, Americus or Magellan, although he is superior to them all."

It is also frequently asserted, with indeed some show of probability, that Magellan made great use of the practical and scientific knowledge and charts of Behaim: some say, that when Magellan, in 1519, in the audience chamber of Emanuel, king of Portugal, proposed his grand idea of voyaging westerly to the Indies of the east, by which in his memorable voyage he so signally accomplished the hopes of Columbus and his age, he there saw a chart of the coasts of America, drawn by Behaim, which at once made plain his path before him; and others say that Magellan carried either these charts, or this very terrestrial globe with him as his companion. It is enough to say that our sequel will show that this globe would not have been of much service to Magellan.

In 1486, Martin Behaim married, at the island of Fayal, the daughter of Alphonsus Sanchez de Huelva, (the name is sometimes given as Job de Huerta) of that island, likewise eminent as an experienced navigator. Christopher Columbus had previously married the daughter of Bartholomew Palestrello, of the island of Madeira, where Columbus spent much time in study and preparation of charts; and all authorities agree that from the year 1486 till the year 1489, these two eminent men, Columbus and Behaim, of kindred tastes and pursuits, were in intimate intercourse and friendship; but no evidence other than the above quoted assertions of chroniclers exists, of what aid if any, that Martin Behaim during this period rendered to the theory of Columbus.

In 1491 Behaim returned home to Nürembergh; and there, at the request of the principal magistrates of the city, he commenced, and in August, 1492, completed his celebrated terrestrial globe.

In 1493 he returned to Portugal and Fayal, and after one short and adventurous voyage, died in Lisbon, in 1506. I will close my extracts with but two sentences from the memoir of M. Otto. Speaking of his having made his terrestrial globe, he says: "The track of his discoveries may there be seen under the name of 'Western Lands,' and from their situation it cannot be doubted that they are the present coasts of Brazil, and the environs of the Straits of Magellan. This globe was made in the same year, that Columbus set out on his expedition, from whence it is not possible that Behaim could have profited by the works of this navigator, who besides went a much more northerly course."

This prefatory summary of his life, and the theories that have been attached to his fame, will find its best apology for a length which may seem tedious, in the interest which it may throw about the final and chief monument of his life,—his terrestrial globe. No other person has, as far as I am informed, given in print a description of this globe: and it is much to be regretted that Mr. Irving did not close his digest of the chief events in the life of "Martin Behem," in the Appendix to the 3d volume of his history of Columbus, by something more than a mere allusion, arising probably from his lack of opportunity of inspection.\* It may well happen that the Augsburg rail road may bring many a traveller to quiet Nürembergh, whose appreciation would be highly gratified by a sight of the globe; but it is not in the catalogue of the lions of the town, which the valet is prepared to show the traveller; who, unless favored by personal friends resident there, may very likely depart from Nürembergh, without even the knowledge of its existence and preservation.

In the New York Literary World for the twenty-second day of January, 1848, I find an article entitled "Nürembergh;" whose preparation, beguiled some weary hours of my quarantine at Malta, in the previous November; containing a sketch of the present state and appearance of that city, and among other matters a description of Behaim's terrestrial globe.

\* I am in this favored by the confirmation of Mr. Irving himself, that he had never visited Nürembergh, or seen this globe.

I ask your permission, to extract therefrom such brief statement of facts as may be material to our present purpose.

“There is one other object of interest which is worth notice, before bidding adieu to Nürembergh. The family of Behaim here, possess a globe made by their ancestor, Martin Behaim, in the year 1492, while Columbus was yet at sea. It is in the mansion adjoining the Lindauer gallery. It is said to be the earliest in existence; and tradition says that its artist was an early patron, by his wealth and influence of the enterprise of Columbus. It is in perfect preservation, although dingy enough by the lapse of centuries. About two feet in diameter, it is suspended in a brass circle marked with the courses of the winds, with the names, and after the notions of classical geographers. The Equinoctial and Zodiac are defined, but there is an utter absence of latitude and longitude. America, North or South, is not there; the ocean flows over that side of the earth which afterwards belonged to the Western World; and the fancy of the artist has depicted some whales spouting in the locality of the United States; and some Spanish Caravals are sailing in unknown directions over Mexico. A few mermaids are combing their locks somewhere near modern Greenland, and in old German, he has inscribed underneath, the intelligence that many of these peculiar animals are to be met with thereabouts. The configuration of Europe is certainly singular; a certain wavy line answers for all coasts; England is about the size of Malta; Germany of modern Russia; Spain about double the size of France; the Mediterranean dwindles to a small lake; a vast region protrudes into the sea beyond the Indies, and is described as the domain of the famous Kaiser Prester John, in the words, ‘hier wohnt der sehr berühmter Kaiser Prester Johan.’ The Antilles are small obscure islands, near the west coast of Africa. The Red Sea is a huge ocean, colored *red*; and Palestine is of the size of modern Turkey. The geographer evidently proportions the countries according to their relative importance. The whole surface is studded with droll figures, as specimens of the inhabitants, productions and distinctive features of the countries, with continual inscriptions in German, of

their names, character, discovery, etc.; forming a diligent abstract of the works of the travellers and geographers whose names are quoted as authorities, and thus giving a very complete idea and resumé of the state of geographical knowledge of the time.

“This rarity, although amusing enough to us, is evidently the work of a man of much reading; and it certainly has an additional interest as showing the state of geographical knowledge existing in Europe at that period, when the great discoverer of a Western World had at last set forth on the voyage of achievement of the long settled purposes and convictions of his mind. Looking at this relic, one readily sees what vast obstacles were in his path; the causes of the deeply settled unbelief which met him on every appeal for assistance to his project, and how strangely it must have sounded to their ears, when he reasoned of the actual existence of a mighty continent in that waste of waters, which their fancy peopled with mermaids and other denizens of the deep. The Globe bears the autograph of the maker, and the date of its construction or completion, August, 1492, and is of course above all price to the family who still possess it. A few years since the French Academy of Sciences, caused a beautiful fac-simile in papier mache to be made of it, and one of the copies was presented to the family. The two globes stand together, and are open to examination of any one on application to the family.”

In conclusion, I may be pardoned for adding a few words—a mere historic glimpse of Behaim’s native city—Nürembergh; being an extract from the same review article, in a notice of the antiquity of families there.

The princes of Nürembergh were a burgher aristocracy in their origin; wealthy merchants, who either for a timely loan, or for some equally important ministry to the necessities of the great lord or neighboring kings, were raised to the rank of the noblesse, and the chronicles of the city are filled with records of numerous charters of freedoms and privileges of commerce granted to the city itself on similar considerations. The oldest of such charters still existing in the city archives, dated in

twelve hundred and nineteen,\* the gift or concession of the Emperor Frederick II., creates it a free city of the Empire, exempting it from taxes or service to other feudal lords, providing imperial courts of justice, and endowing it with rights of markets, fairs, coinage and many other commercial privileges. With this and many other similar and subsequent charters, the city grew rich and prosperous, its artisans were famous, its markets crowded with their own fabrics, and with the luxuries of the East; for according to its chronicles, the North and West of Europe were supplied by the merchant princes of Nürembergh. Instead of being as now a comparatively inferior city of some forty thousand inhabitants, its archives tell us of the days when a great portion of the commerce of Northern Europe and the Indian trade were in its hands; when there were more than one hundred thousand busy citizens here, when the merchants of Northern and Central Europe came in great numbers to its fairs and markets, and its burgher noblesse were the friends and equals of princes. All this has long since changed. The discovery of the passage of the Cape of Good Hope naturally diverted a large portion of its commerce, and it fell into a decline from which it has not yet fully recovered. So when the stranger now walks its quiet streets, he must in a great degree, content himself with the vestiges of its past greatness and its departed commercial pre-eminence, though he must feel a certain sadness in seeing the immortal arts of Dürer, Visscher and Kraft, degenerated in the hands of their modern successors, to the manufacture of German toys, and to find the once northern Venice now-a-days famous mainly for bijouterie.

\* This date is but fifteen years after the capture, plunder and occupation of Constantinople, by the Fourth Crusade. Its diadem was given to Baldwin, Count of Flanders, Henry II., and their successors, till A. D. 1260, when the Greek Empire was for a brief period restored. The Fourth Crusade as is well known, opened the wealth of the East to Europe, and its treasures we are told, began even then to ascend the Danube; whose waters have within the last thirty years, by the enterprise of the Hungarian Count Sczécheny, again become the pathway of oriental commerce, with Vienna and Western Europe.



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